



**SEED**  
promoting entrepreneurship  
for sustainable development



**Flanders**  
State of the Art

## Fifteen African eco-inclusive enterprises receive prestigious SWITCH Africa Green-SEED Awards



**New York, 13 July 2017** - Bags made from banana stem leftovers in Kenya, school benches manufactured from plastic wastes and other locally sourced materials in Burkina Faso, improving livelihoods of coffee farmers and protecting mountain gorillas in Uganda—these are some highlights of the innovative 15 winners of this year's **SWITCH Africa Green-SEED Awards** announced during the High Level Political Forum 2017 in New York.

The SEED global partnership recognizes the most innovative, environmentally friendly start-ups in developing countries and provides them with business know-how support and profile regionally and nationally to help them grow and share their experiences. It was founded in 2002 by United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

*"SEED is all about helping spur innovation that protects our natural environment and accelerates development," says **Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment**. "Past winners have delivered grass-roots solutions on issues including waste management, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. They see environmental protection not as a cost or a burden, but as an opportunity. As such, they are laying the foundations for what our planet needs: a fundamental shift towards a green economy."*

*"Ecological business models have a huge role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals," says **Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator**. "We congratulate this year's SEED Winners for demonstrating that business really can be profitable whilst respecting nature and the environment. Their innovative ideas, supported by SEED and partner organizations, stand as examples for other businesses that are striving to fight poverty and climate change in ways that are sustainable" he added.*



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



*“In the context of perhaps our greatest global challenge – meeting growing consumer demands while managing increasingly overburdened natural resources, many eco-inclusive enterprises, such as those recognised in this year’s SEED Awards are turning challenges into opportunities, and, in so doing, are part of a vital step change in the way we do business,” says IUCN Director General Inger Andersen. “It is this new generation of entrepreneurs, and their solutions-oriented thinking, that will help us achieve a sustainable global economy that works with nature rather than against it.”*

The 2017 **SWITCH Africa Green** (SAG) – SEED Awards are sponsored by the SWITCH Africa Green project implemented by the UN Environment and funded by the European Union and the awards in South Africa are co-financed by the Government of Flanders. The **Government of Flanders** focuses towards addressing climate change and its effects on South Africa. The winners represent visionary multi-stakeholder partnerships across sectors to lift people out of poverty while protecting the environment.

The SAG-SEED Award winner will receive free access to supporting institutions, and tailored one-on-one advisory service that offers assistance with their business and financial plan, as well as additional marketing and promotional activities by SEED. The support methodology and content is based on more than 10 years of experience in assisting eco-inclusive enterprises worldwide. The winners will also join a network of more than 200 enterprises from 38 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America - laureates of the SEED Awards.

This year, the winners will be honoured through the high-level Awards Ceremony at four different national and regional **events**. These events are part of the implementation of ‘Promoting Eco-Entrepreneurship in Africa’, a SWITCH-Africa Green multi-country project in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda.

These 15 winning enterprises were selected by an independent **Jury of International Experts** out of more than 300 applications. The innovative enterprises are active in the sectors of agriculture, waste management, energy, manufacturing, biodiversity conservation and tourism. Further details about them can be found on SEED’s website at <https://www.seed.uno/awards/all/2017.html>.

## About SEED

SEED is a global partnership for action on sustainable development and the inclusive green economy that was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Union for Conservation of Nature at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. SEED promotes eco-inclusive solutions for sustainable development by shaping a supportive “ecosystem” and increasing the resilience of small and growing enterprises in developing countries. Partners in SEED, in addition to the Founding Partners, are the governments of Flanders, Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United States of America; Conservation International; the European Union; SWITCH Africa Green; Hogan Lovells; UNIDO; UN Women and SEED’s Corporate Partner, Hisense. SEED is hosted by adelphi research gGmbH, based in Germany.

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